Systematics and Biogeography of *Ctenophilus* Cook, 1898. A Genus of Centipedes with Disjunct Distribution (Geophilomorpha, Schendylidae)

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ABSTRACT

Among all known genera of Schendylidae *Ctenophilus* Cook, 1898 is the only one characterized by having the pleurites of the second maxillae fused with the posterior border of the coxosternum (apomorphic state of the character). In all the remaining genera of the family the pleurites are not fused (plesiomorphic state of the character).

This genus has a wide distribution in Africa, with twelve species known to date. It is also present (but much less widespread) in the Neotropical Region with one species in the Caribbean area.

A historical summary is provided for the genus, as well as observations on the taxonomic significance of various characters heretofore utilized to distinguish genera of Schendylids.

Ctenophilus amieti (Demange, 1963), *C. chevalieri* (Brölemann & Ribaut, 1911), *C. corticeus* (Demange, 1968), *C. edentulus* (Porat, 1894), *C. magnus* (Demange, 1963), *C. nesiotes* (Chamberlin, 1918), *C. nitidus* (Brölemann, 1926), *C. oligopodus* (Demange, 1963) and *C. pratensis* (Demange, 1963) are redescribed and figured from type material and/or additional specimens and a map showing the geographical distribution of all species of the genus is included.

It is not known enough about the genus *Ctenophilus* and its nearest relatives to be able to confidently suggest an explanation of the amphiatlantic pattern of distribution (which is common to some other genera of geophilomorphs such as *Schendylurus*, *Pectiniunguis*, etc.). Plate tectonic events are considered being very evident the convinience to develop a cladistical analysis within the Schendylids together with a biogeographical study.

It is also considered the case of the halophilous geophilomorphs. The scattered and often wide-ranging distribution of these centipedes has been commented upon several times, specially by CLOUDSLEY-THOMPSON (1948), CRABILL (1960) and KEVAN (1983). Such species are very probably dispersed by rafting across very large distances, although in a very impredictable way. CRABILL (1960) even suggested that this way of dispersal might explain trans-Atlantic disjunction between South America and Africa. More data are obviously required and individual cases must be investigated in depth before we can assess the actual extent of this phenomenon and its possible occurence within *Ctenophilus*.

RÉSUMÉ

Systématique et biogéographie de *Ctenophilus* Cook, 1898 ; un genre de chilopodes à aire disjointe (Geophilomorpha, Schendylidae).

Ce travail propose une révision de l'ensemble du genre *Ctenophilus* Cook, largement répandu d'une part en Afrique (12 espèces), d'autre part dans la zone néotropicale (1 espèce dans l'aire Caraïbe). La révision de la systématique et de la classification des espèces composant le genre conduit à une discussion relative aux modalités de sa dispersion en deux aires actuellement disjointes et éloignées.

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